Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program 2026 Program Manual

Chapter 8: Program Completion, Transition Services, and Follow-up

Chapter Overview

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Reference program completion definitions.
- Complete the required Pre-Transition Career Assessment and Transition Plan.
- Describe transition staff responsibilities.
- Provide transition and follow-up services.
- Differentiate between active follow-up versus long-term follow-up.
- Integrate the core values of diversity, welcoming and inclusion, accessibility, belonging, and equity into all elements of your program's transition services and follow-up activities.

Program Completion

Program completion refers to the conclusion of instructional training. For most participants, program completion will mark the end of their instructional training and the beginning of their transition to a clean energy job, Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), or advanced training program in clean energy. Most participants should complete *both* the bridge program component *and* a job-specific training option, as described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework in Chapter 7. Some participants may transition to clean energy jobs or advanced training after completing the bridge program component only.

Completion

Completion occurs when the participant has achieved one or both of the following:

1. Met the testing and attendance requirements outlined in the Bridge Program component of the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (see Chapter 7), including:

    a. Receiving a satisfactory grade on post-assessments (70% or higher)
    b. Attending at least 80% of the sessions related to Essential Employability Skills and Clean Energy Basics
    c. Meeting requirements to receive OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR certifications.
    d. Completing all worksite/work-based learning training requirements associated with the bridge program curriculum
2. Met the testing and attendance requirements outlined in one or more job-specific training options, as described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework, including:

    a. Receiving a satisfactory grade on post-assessments (70% or higher)
    b. Attending at least 80% of the sessions for each module.
    c. Meeting requirements to prepare for certification exams.
    d. Completing all worksite/work-based learning training requirements.

Successful completion of the bridge program and the job-specific training will be reported in the CEJA Reporting System. Those who successfully complete either or both of these two training elements are referred to as **individuals who complete**. While not required, some grantees may opt to host celebratory ceremonies or offer additional certificates of completion beyond the CEJA Certificate of Completion.

***Note**: If a participant chooses to update their credentials (e.g., Bridge Program), participants can receive a stipend for training to update expired or outdated credentials. For more information, access the **CEJA Policy 03-PL-24 Stipend and Incentives** policy on the CEJA Policy page in the Partner Guide.*

Some participants may find jobs immediately after completing the bridge program or even before completing the bridge program. While not technically complete, these participant scenarios still count as positive program outcomes. Workforce Hubs grantees should note both Service Statuses *and* Program Statuses for each service and each participant, respectively, in the CEJA Reporting System. In these kinds of scenarios, there will be statuses for complete/incomplete services as well as specific statuses for the program. There are three service statuses and corresponding program statuses to note in these participant scenarios. The first scenario reflects the traditional completion route. The other two will occur if job placement takes place prior to completion of either the bridge and/or job-specific training:

1. “Successful Completion” of the bridge training service (service status) and “Successful Completion” of the job-specific training service (service status) with “Completion” (program status) and “Successful Placement” in a job (program status) once training services are complete,
2. “Unsuccessful Completion” of the bridge training service (service status) with “Successful Placement” in a job prior to completion (program status), or

3. “Successful Completion” of the bridge training service (service status) and “Unsuccessful Completion” of the job-specific training service (service status) with “Successful Placement” in a job prior to completion (program status).

Program Exit

A participant exits the program when they no longer receive any services from the program. While Program Completion refers to the conclusion of training services, **Program Exit** refers to the cessation of all services, including transition and barrier reduction services. A participant who exits the program may return to the same or another CEJA program but would need to reapply and re-enroll.

- Participants **exit** the program after they complete the training program or withdraw from their training program.
- If they continue to receive Transition Services, their status changes to **Exit with Follow Up.**

In Progress

Some participants may participate in the program but are unable to graduate because they have not met all program requirements (e.g. failed certification exams, did not attend the required number of training sessions, etc.).

In this instance, they are marked as “**In Progress**” in the CEJA Reporting System. Barrier reduction staff **must** establish an action plan to put them on the path to successful completion within a year of their enrollment in the program. For some, this will simply require them to retake an exam, while others might need to complete specific modules, particularly if they were absent from the program for long periods of time. If participants need to wait for a new cohort to retake modules, grantees must continue engagement with the participants to ensure they can return and successfully complete the program. Participants must complete these requirements within one calendar year from the start of their training. A participant who does not complete the requirements within one year must reapply and re-enroll.

Withdrawal

Participants may withdraw from the program due to unforeseen circumstances that make successful completion difficult or impossible. Reasons for **withdrawal** may include, but not be limited to:

- Moving out of state
- Lack of interest in the clean energy industry
- Life change requiring full-time employment
- Illness

Before a participant’s withdrawal is finalized, the barrier reduction staff must meet with the participant to determine if there are any **barrier reduction services** that can be offered to keep the participant from withdrawing. In some circumstances, additional support may help the participant change their decision to withdraw.

Once the withdrawal decision is finalized, grantees must conduct an **exit interview** with the participant. This is an opportunity to seek participant feedback on the program. The barrier reduction staff will either meet with the participant, if possible or call the participant to complete the **Exit Interview Questionnaire,** which is then uploaded to the participant's profile in the CEJA Reporting System. Grantees must also ask if follow-up contact would be welcomed. In some cases, individuals may seek to re-enroll at a future date.

Note*: A hard copy of the Exit Interview Questionnaire is available in the CEJA Workforce Hubs Partner Guide.*

In some cases, a participant may withdraw and not tell anyone. Barrier reduction staff must attempt to contact the participant via phone, email, or other communication methods to confirm the participant's withdrawal, establish a reason for the withdrawal, inquire about the possibility of meeting to discuss additional service needs that may help the participant remain in the program, and conduct the exit interview. After three consecutive weeks of attempting to make contact, the grantee may finalize the withdrawal decision in the CEJA Reporting System.

Note*: For additional information regarding barrier reduction, please access the* ***CEJA Policy 02-PL-24 Barrier Reduction*** *policy on the [CEJA Policy](#) page in the Partner Guide.*

Dismissals are also classified as withdrawals. This occurs when participants fail to comply with the terms of their commitment agreement or violate program policies. Grantees **must** maintain a dismissal policy that outlines a standard procedure for how, when, and why participants can be dismissed. Once dismissal has been confirmed, all services must be terminated through the CEJA Reporting System. A formal dismissal letter must be provided to the participant, and a copy must be saved in the participant's profile in the CEJA Reporting System outlining the reasons for dismissal and the process that was followed by the program.

Note*: Withdrawal reasons should be added to the CEJA Reporting System as a Case Note for the participant.*

Participant Feedback Survey

All participants who have completed the program will be asked to provide feedback on their program experience through a **Participant Feedback Survey**. Asking participants to complete the survey is a mandatory step.

This survey can be accessed by participants via a computer or mobile device through a link provided by program administrators. All responses to this survey are anonymous, and individual data will not be made available to grantees. However, grantees will be provided with aggregate information from their participants as a tool to improve programming.

Transition/Career Services

Transition/Career Services involve activities that expose participants to clean energy job opportunities and advanced training programs and help them gain employment. This can be achieved by involving participants in relevant industry events (e.g. career fairs, trade-related networking events, etc.), assisting them with applications, preparing them for testing, and helping with other employment or entry requirements. Transition services begin well before the completion of the program and continue after participants have successfully completed the instructional component of the program.

Transition staff are responsible for transition and follow-up services. Their work with participants will take place primarily at the end of the participant's time in the program. Transition services may include providing career information, resume writing, interview preparation, assistance with completing an application, job application assistance, referral for job search assistance, referral for assistance with opening a business, referral to a community college, or referral to an American Job Center, among others. Barrier Reduction funds may be used for any application fees. Some of these services can be provided while participants are completing their training.

Transition staff must also dedicate time to building relationships with employers, training programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and contractors to set up connections and resources for participants once they are ready to transition. Responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with transition partners including clean energy employers, DOL-registered apprenticeship programs, community colleges, and contractors/construction employers, among others.
- Working with transition partners including employers to provide transition services such as interview practice, job fairs, classroom visits, and more.

Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan

The transition staff will begin transition services by working with participants to complete the **Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan**. A copy of the Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan is available in the CEJA Workforce Hubs Partner Guide.

This Assessment and Plan is completed three to four weeks prior to the end of training. It is intended to determine participants' skill levels, service needs, barriers to employment or apprenticeship placement, occupational goals, and career pathway. It addresses the occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with their career goals, and the services needed to reach their goal. The assessment and plan document the participant's career decisions (i.e. which apprenticeship programs they want to apply to) and lists the services that the grantee will provide to help the applicant reach their goals. The completed Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan should be uploaded into the CEJA Reporting System under the participant's file uploads area.

Updating Career Goals in the CEJA Reporting System

Information from the Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan must be used to update participants' career goals in the CEJA Reporting System. Participants are asked to set career goals during the intake process when they complete the initial Career Assessment (see chapter 5). Their career goals may or may not have changed as they have progress through the training program. They may now know more about the different types of jobs or apprenticeship programs they are interested in pursuing. As they near the end of the training program, they will have the opportunity to refine their career goals, set new ones, and discuss the steps needed to achieve those goals. Make sure participants' career goals are updated in the CEJA Reporting System.

Tracking Transition/Career Services in the CEJA Reporting System

The Pre-Transition Career Assessment and Plan also ask participants a series of questions about the transition/career services that they would like to receive to assist them with their transition to a job, registered apprenticeship, or advanced training program.

The transition services that they select **must** be recorded and tracked in the CEJA Reporting System. You can select them in the drop-down services menu in the Career Plan section of the CEJA Reporting System. Transition staff must regularly update the system to show which transition services have been provided.

The table below shows the transition/career services that can be selected in the CEJA Reporting System.

Table 8.1 Transition/Career services

Transition/career service	Description
Vocational exploration (career awareness)	Learn about the variety of careers and occupations available, their skill requirements, working conditions, pre-requisites, and job opportunities. Explore careers that match participant interests, skills, and abilities.
Career planning (case-management)	One-on-one assistance and career counseling to assess the areas in which participants have the greatest needs and to assist them in determining whether their skills are in demand in the local economy.
Group workforce workshops and activities	Workshops or group activities to provide participants with knowledge of labor market information, application/resume preparation, interview techniques, or job search techniques.
Career fairs	Opportunities to meet with employers or apprenticeship programs, learn about careers, and apply for jobs.
Assistance with completing an apprenticeship program application	Assistance with completing a registered apprenticeship application in the construction/building trades.
Job search activities and assistance	One-on-one assistance in job search activities, including locating job openings, resume writing, and setting up interviews. This may include

	finding temporary/transitional employment while on the waiting list for an apprenticeship.
Post secondary prep and transition activities	Assistance with preparing to apply for postsecondary education or training in a related field. This may include exploring options such as community college and universities, preparing for testing, assistance with college admission applications, filling out financial aid applications, and applying for scholarships and grants.
Out of area job search/relocation assistance	Assistance for those who have skills that are in-demand in other labor markets, but not in their local labor market, to locate employment opportunities. This includes access to job listings, contacting employers, assistance preparing resumes, etc. This includes assistance with moving to their new job site.
Referral to other employment/placement assistance	If the participant is no longer interested in a clean energy/construction career, transition staff may refer them to an American Job Center where they can get assistance in applying to other jobs and training programs.
Unemployment insurance filing information	Assistance filing claims for unemployment compensation.
Referral for assistance with opening a business	Referral to a Small Business Development Center, Contractor Incubator, or other service.
Alumni Networking	Provide opportunities for time-limited interactions geared toward one-on-one meetings with alumni.

Note**: There is **Alumni Networking (Support Service)** and **Alumni Networking (Transition Service). *Alumni Networking (Support Service) is addressed in Chapter 6: Barrier Reduction Services.*

Continue to Offer Support Services

Grantees **must** continue to provide comprehensive barrier reduction services during the transition and follow-up period (the 12 months following program completion) to help facilitate effective transitions into jobs or advanced training opportunities.

The need for barrier reduction services does not end when the program is complete. During the application or job search period, applicants may still need barrier reduction services to address transportation and childcare needs. These may continue for the first few months after they have received a job, before program graduates are able to cover the costs themselves. As much as possible, programs should coordinate services within their local community. Barrier reduction services that support student needs (such as mentoring or tutoring) must also be made available during the transition and follow-up period.

***Note**: For more information about available services, see Chapter 6: Barrier Reduction Services. For additional information regarding barrier reduction, please access the **CEJA Policy 02-PL-24 Barrier Reduction** policy on the CEJA Policy page in the Partner Guide.*

Connecting to Employers through the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Grantees are strongly recommended to help participants register as an Equity Eligible Person in the **Illinois Power Agency's Energy Workforce Equity Portal**. Grantees should help participants update their information in this system prior to training completion, and participant profiles should be updated on at least a quarterly basis for the first-year post-completion.

The Illinois Power Agency's Energy Workforce Equity Portal is an online resource designed to help connect clean energy companies with Equity Investment Eligible Persons looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois. Many clean energy companies have minimum equity standards that require them to hire a certain percentage of Equity Investment Eligible Persons. Participants of the CEJA workforce programs qualify as Equity Investment Eligible Persons. Making these connections is a key aspect of ensuring that the clean energy industry in Illinois grows in an equitable manner. The portal also provides a clean energy job listing dashboard where participants and transition staff can search for jobs.

Participants can use this portal to post their availability to entities seeking to hire Equity Investment Eligible Persons. Developers of clean energy projects (such as Approved Vendors and Designees in Illinois Shines or Solar for All, or developers of utility-scale wind and solar projects) can use this portal to post clean energy jobs and to search for Equity Investment Eligible Persons. Through this portal, participants may be matched with contractors and apprenticeship programs based on geography and trade needs.

Grantees are **strongly recommended** to help participants register as an Equity Eligible Person in the Illinois Power Agency's **Energy Workforce Equity Portal.** To Register as an Equity Eligible Person, go to the **Job Seekers page** on the portal. Click on "**Register as an Equity Eligible Person**." Grantees should build in time prior to training completion to help register participants. Once participants are registered, grantees must manually mark this task as "**complete"** in the CEJA Reporting System on the Program Completion/Follow-up tab.

***Note**: If another organization assists a participant or completes registration for the participant, they will be required to submit further information, such as a self-attestation form providing permission for registration.*

To register, participants will need the following information:

- Basic contact information including phone number and email address
- Available shifts (if applicable)

- Training program information
- Graduation date
- Skills and certifications received
- Region(s) available to work

The form asks participants to upload their CEJA Certificate of Completion, which will be applicable if they register after training concludes. Participants can also attach a resume.

***Note**: For more information about how to navigate this system, refer to the Energy Workforce Equity Portal.*

Participant Outcomes

Outcomes must be tracked in the CEJA Reporting System. There are two outcome options, a **Primary Outcome** and a **Secondary Outcome.**

Primary Outcomes –
Participants who are placed in a clean energy job or advanced training program following the successful completion of the training program.

- Participants who attain a job in the clean energy industry. *
- Participants who are placed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program in the construction and building trades.
- Participants who enroll in an advanced training program related to clean energy.
- Participants who open a small business.

Secondary Outcomes –
Participants who receive a job or enroll in a training program outside the clean energy industry following the successful completion of the training program.

- Participants who attain training related employment outside of the clear energy industry.
- Participants who are placed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program outside of the construction and building trades.
- Participants who enroll in an advanced training program unrelated to clean energy.

***Defining clean energy jobs.** CEJA's definition of "clean energy jobs" includes jobs in the solar energy, wind energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, solar thermal, green hydrogen, geothermal, electric vehicle industries, other renewable energy industries, industries achieving emission reductions, and other related sectors including related industries that manufacture, develop, build, maintain, or provide ancillary services to renewable energy resources or energy efficiency products or services, including the manufacture and installation of healthier building materials that contain fewer hazardous chemicals. Clean energy jobs also include administrative, sales, other support functions within these industries and other related sector industries.

Many clean energy jobs are not focused exclusively on activities related to clean energy (e.g., an electrician may only spend a portion of their time on clean energy activities). Clean energy jobs include those where a portion of the time or a majority of the time is spent on activities related to clean energy.

Active Follow-Up

Transition staff are expected to conduct **active follow-up** with participants for the first-year post-transition, and once per year thereafter until the grant ends. There are many ways to stay in touch with program graduates, including through surveys, focus groups, phone calls, text messages, social media, and email check-ins. The purpose of follow-up activities is to determine participants' additional needs, receive valuable feedback about program services, and verify progress and outcomes. The first-year post-transition is a period when new hires may be most vulnerable to leaving the industry.

Active follow-up is **required** at the following intervals, though more frequent follow-ups may be needed based on individual circumstances:

- One month after transition
- Two months after transition
- Three months after transition
- Six months after transition
- Nine months after transition
- One year after transition
- Two years after transition
- Three years after transition

During each follow-up contact, grantees will ask graduates a series of questions to gather information about their employment status or their progress in their training program.

***Note**: Sample follow-up questions are available in the CEJA Reporting System.*

These follow-ups are also opportunities to provide encouragement, answer questions, and assess the need for additional services. Transition staff must uphold the six equity values and communicate clearly with care, empathy, and sensitivity to the diverse needs and situations of participants. Grantee staff **must** embrace differences and remember that individual characteristics and challenges do not define a person's entire identity.

Follow-up services and activities after transition help facilitate further development and boost retention. If participants are not responsive to follow-up, transition staff are required to make continued attempts at contact. After three consecutive weeks of attempting to make contact, the grantee may discontinue attempts and must document the attempts in the CEJA Reporting System. Any follow-up services offered must be tracked in the CEJA Reporting System.

The table below describes allowable follow-up services.

Table 8.2: Follow-up Services

Follow-up Service	Description
Individual Work Counseling	Individual counseling regarding the workplace or apprenticeship, including resolving work-related employment issues, helping to secure better paying jobs, additional career planning and counseling for individuals, and provision of information regarding additional education or employment opportunities.
Employer Contact and Intervention	May include contacting employers to verify employment to help secure better paying jobs or to resolve work-related issues.
Peer Support Group	Connecting individuals to peer support groups to provide opportunities for training, support, and resolving issues.
Mentorship	Mentorship with an adult (for youth participants) or an experienced worker to assist with workplace issues.
Career Advancement Services	Services that provide individuals with information about additional education or employment opportunities to advance in their careers and secure better paying jobs. Services may also include labor market and employment information regarding in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the graduates' local geographic areas. This may include career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services, among others.
Barrier Reduction Support Services	Participants may continue to receive barrier reduction services (see above) for the first 12 months after training program completion. This includes referrals to community service providers.
Opening a Business Assistance Referral	Referral to a Small Business Development Center, CEJA Contractor Incubator, or other centers.

Long-Term Follow-up

Beyond the first year of active tracking, CEJA Workforce Programs will employ a **longitudinal study** to track employment and outcomes every year for up to ten years after leaving the program. This longitudinal study is essential in determining the effectiveness of CEJA Workforce Hubs and their impact on individuals, communities, and the economy. Grantees are expected to assist with this longitudinal study during the duration of their grant.

Note*: For more information regarding the longitudinal study, see Chapter 10: Data Management.*

Additional Resources

See the CEJA Workforce Hubs Partner Guide for:

- Exit Interview Questionnaire
- Participant Satisfaction Survey
- Pre-Transition Career Assessment and Plan
- Sample follow-up questions
- Sample Dismissal Letter